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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05  
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03  
H-01 /072 W

-----067497 130047Z /12

R 122133Z SEP 77  
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5299  
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
USMISSION GENEVA

SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 2979

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: AR, PINT, SHUM, PINS  
SUBJECT: PERONIST-MONTONERO MOVEMENT CONVERSATION WITH US  
CHURCH LEADER

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF  
U.S. REPORTS TWO LONG, "INFORMAL, NON-OFFICIAL, PRIVATE"  
CONVERSATIONS, WITH KEY LEADERS OF MONTONERO PERONIST  
MOVEMENT (MRM). LEADERS CLAIM INTEREST IN OPENING  
DIALOGUE WITH USG, INSIST ON THEIR WILLINGNESS AND CAPACITY  
TO CEASE ARMED STRUGGLE ONCE FREE ELECTIONS AND OTHER  
CONDITIONS ARE MET AND PROFESS BELIEF IN MULTI-PARTY  
SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

2. WILLIAM THOMPSON, STATED CLERK OF THE UNITED PRES-  
BYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE USA, AND PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF THE U.S.A. , CONTACTED MISOFF  
(AN OLD FRIEND) AND MET WITH MISOFF ON SEPTEMBER 8  
AT FORMER'S REQUEST. HE INFORMED MISOFF OF HIS IMPRESSIONS  
AND SUMMARY OF TWO MEETINGS THAT HE HAD IN GENEVA ON AUGUST  
6 AND 7 OF THIS YEAR WITH THREE LEADERS OF THE MPM:  
JUAN GELMAN, FERNANDO VACA NARVAJA, AND OSCAR RAUL  
BIDEGAIN (OFFICIAL MPM BIO SKETCHES OF THREE CONTAINED

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/PS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny  
Exemption(s):  
Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full  
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to  
Date ☐ Declassify on Reason

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IN PAMPHLET POUCH TO SCHIELE IOP SEPTEMBER 8:  
"RESISTER C'EST VINCRE: MOUVEMENT PERONISTE MONTONERO.")  
THOMPSON ASKED THAT , INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE, THE FACT OF  
THESE MEETINGS AND THE NAMES OF THE PARTICIPANTS  
BE PROTECTED. ALSO PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETINGS, AND  
THE KEY INTERMEDIARY, WAS THE REV. CHARLES HARPER,  
(AMCIT, PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER) AN OFFICIAL OF THE WORLD  
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

3. THERE THREE MEMBERS OF THE MPM ARE MEMBERS OF THE  
"SUPERIOR COMMAND" OF THAT PARTY, WHICH THEY CLAIM TO BE  
THE RESULT OF THE MERGER OF THE "AUTHENTIC PERONIST PARTY"  
AND THE MONTONEROS, AND WHOSE AIMS ARE SET FORTH IN THE  
PAMPHLET MENTIONED ABOVE, REFERRED TO AS THE "ROME  
DECLARATION". GELMAN AND BIDEAIN ARE EXILES, AND  
EVIDENTLY NARVAJA LIVES MOST OF THE TIME CLANDESTINELY  
IN ARGENTINA. HE WAS INTRODUCED TO THOMPSON AS "SECOND  
IN COMMAND OF THE MONTONERO ARMY, AND SECRETARY FOR  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE SUPREME COMMAND." THE  
THREE CLAIMED TO BE SPEAKING INFORMALLY WITHIN THE GUIDE-  
LINES OF THE SUPREME COMMAND.

4. THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IT APPEARS FROM  
THOMPSON'S REPORT WAS TO PROBE FOR MORE CONTACTS WITH  
THE USG, TO OFFER MPM'S VIEW OF THE PROCESS OF TRAN-  
SITION TO DEMOCRATIC RULE AND TO SUGGEST POLICIES  
AND ACTIONS TO THE USG THAT COULD PROMOTE THIS PROCESS.  
THE MPM IS NOT, ACCORDING TO THE THREE A "CLASSIC  
GUERRILLA MOVEMENT", BUT RATHER A PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT  
THAT HAS RESORTED TO VIOLENCE ONLY AS A MEANS OF  
SELF-DEFENSE AND BECAUSE ALL OTHER MEANS OF POLITICAL  
ACTIVITY WERE BANNED. THE AIMS OF THE MPM ARE:  
TO GATHER TOGETHER ALL THE OPPOSITION TO MILITARY  
[REDACTED]  
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RULE IN ARGENTINA, TO WORK FOR THE "POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY,  
ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE" OF ARGENTINA,  
AND THE PACIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RETURN  
TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. THE MPM LEADERS INSISTED  
REPEATEDLY TO THOMPSON THAT THEY FAVOR FREE ELECTIONS, THAT  
THEY RECOGNIZE THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES MUST BE FREE  
TO PARTICIPATE, AND THAT THEY ARE ONLY ONE (THOUGH THEY  
FEEL THEY ARE THE LARGEST) OF THE PARTIES. THEY TOLD

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THOMPSON THEY FEEL THAT THE YSG DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THEM THIS WAY, WHILE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS--TO WHOM THEY EVIDENTLY FEEL CLOSE--DO. THEY INSISTED THAT "THERE IS NO MILITARY SOLUTION TO ARGENTINA'S PROBLEMS; FREE ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY ARE THE ONLY SOLUTIONS." THEY DENIED WANTING TO DESTROY THE ARGENTINE ARMY, BUT SAID THEY HAD TRIED SEVERAL TIMES, INCLUDING THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, TO DIALOGUE WITH THE ARMY, BUT HAD BEEN REBUFFED. IN SPITE OF THIS, THEY CLAIM THAT THERE ARE "MANY OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY JUNIOR OFFICERS" WHO DISAGREE WITH THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES, AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THEM.

5. THEY CRITICIZED THE IMMEDIATE PREVIOUS US AMBASSADOR AND AMBASSADOR BRADEN AS FAVORING A POLICY OF PATIENCE WITH AUTHORITARIAN RULE, AND EXPRESSED THE BELIEF THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECHES DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND SINCE THE ELECTION, AS WELL AS THE PLATFORM OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, ALL SEEM TO THEM TO INDICATE A NEW POLICY. THE ESPECIALLY NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD CALLED FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PEOPLE IN THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS, AND THAT DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY SHOULD BE RELATED. IF THIS WERE SO, THEY CLAIMED, THE USG COULD SPEED UP THE PROCESS OF RE-DEMOCRATIZING ARGENTINA. BUT THEY EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE "OLD POLICY" OF "GIVING MORE TIME TO THE JUNTA" WAS REALLY COMPLETELY REVERSED, AND EXPRESSED AN EAGERNESS TO BE A PART OF

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SOME DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING WHAT US POLICY TOWARDS ARGENTINA SHOULD BE.

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H-01 /072 W

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
USMISSION GENEVA

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6. WHEN THOMPSON ASKED WHAT SPECIFICALLY US SHOULD O,  
THEY REPLIED THAT US SHOULD MOVE TOWARDS ECONOMIC  
SANCTIONS AS WELL AS CUT-OFFS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.  
THEY ALSO SAID THAT US NEEDS A CONSISTENT POLICY  
TOWARDS ALL DICTATORS, AND MENTIONED THAT THE US  
WAS MORE FOCUSED ON CHILE, IN THEIR OPINION, THAN  
ON ARGENTINA.

7. WHEN THOMPSON ASKED IF THEY WOULD CEASE GUERRILLA  
ACTIVITY IF THEIR CONDITIONS (SPELLED OUT IN THE  
AMPHLET ) WERE MET, THEY RESPONDED, YES. WHEN ASKED  
IF THEY WERE ABLE TO ENFORCE THIS, THEY SAID YES, BUT  
THEY COULD NOT SPEAK FOR THE ERP, WITH WHOM THEY DO NOT  
YET HAVE "A TOTAL POLITICAL AGREEMENT." THEY ALSO SAID  
THEY DOUBTED THAT THE PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA WOULD  
BE ACCEPTABLE, AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE REPLACED BY THE  
MILITARY WITH OTHER MILITARY LEADERS BEFORE DIALOGUES COULD  
GET VERY FAR.

8. AS AN IMPORTANT ITEM THEY SUGGESTED THAT THE US SHOULD  
INCREASE PUBLIC PRESSURE FOR THE RELEASE OF FORMER  
PRESIDENT CAMPORA, WHICH THEY BELIEVE WOULD BE A GREAT  
STEP FORWARD TO CREATING A CLIMATE IN WHICH SOME SORT  
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OF CIVILIAN-DOMINATED TRANSITION PROCESS COULD PROCEED.

9. THE THREE MPM LEADERS EMPHASIZED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE  
TO CONTACT WITH RESPONSIBLE USG OFFICIALS, " ANY PLACE IN THE  
WORLD, ANY TIME, " AND SAID THEY WOULD COME TO THE  
US IF INVITED." THEY WOULD LIKE THE FIRST MEETINGS  
TO BE RELATIVELY SECRET, THEY SAID.

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10. THOMPSON OFFERED THE OPINION THAT THE THREE WERE SINCERE AND DEVOTED TO THEIR CAUSE. MAYBE THEY EXAGGERATE SOME TIME THEIR PARTY'S STRENGTH AND UNITY, BUT I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THEM AS MEN AND AS LEADERS". THOMPSON VOLUNTEERED TO MEET FOR A LONGER BRIEFING ON THESE CONVERSATIONS WITH OFFICIALS IN THE DEPARTMENT AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT TIME, IF THERE IS INTEREST. (HE TRAVELS FREQUENTLY TO WASHINGTON.)

11. COMMENT: CHARLES HARPER IN GENEVA IS PROBABLY MUCH MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ARGENTINE AFFAIRS, AND MUCH CLOSER TO THE MPM, IF FURTHER CONTACTS WITH MPM ARE DESIRED. HE IS CLOSE TO THOMPSON. END COMMENT.  
LEONARD

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